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March 16, 2006

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David R. Obey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey:

We are writing to express our strong support for \$400 million for the State Grants portion of the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) program, eliminated in the President's FY 2007 budget recommendation. This amount reflects last year's House-passed funding level.

As you are aware, SDFSC is the federal government's primary initiative to prevent drug use in and around schools. It is currently used by 97% of the nation's school districts and serves more than 37 million youth per year.

We have now established a clear link between the academic achievement of our nation's children and the prevention of substance use in schools. The 2002 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse Report entitled *Marijuana Among Youths* substantiated the connection between substance abuse and academic performance, noting that youths with an average grade of D or below were more than four times as likely to have used marijuana in the past year as youths with an average grade of A. Additionally, a recent study by the University of Washington found that students who use alcohol or other drugs are up to five times more likely to drop out of school.

The SDFSC program is the backbone of youth drug prevention and intervention efforts and has contributed to the 19% decline in drug use over the past four years. We have seen in our communities that the SDFSC money is being used effectively and can demonstrate measurable results. Although the Department of Education has not yet collected and reported to Congress the State drug incidence and prevalence data as required in the No Child Left Behind Act (Sections 4116 and 4122) and as directed in the FY 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services and

Education Report language, many states have exercised due diligence and collected the data and information on their programs. For example:

- Alabama – Reported decreases among sixth to 11th graders in alcohol use, illicit drug use and marijuana use. Among these students, 30 day use of marijuana decreased at a rate of 1.2%, from 16.8% in 2003 to 16.6% in 2004. Thirty-day alcohol use also decreased among sixth to 11th graders at a rate of 1.3%, from 45.7% in 2003 to 45.1% in 2004.
- Alaska - Reported a decrease of 54% among Alaska high school students reporting having ever used inhalants from 22.2% in 1995 to 10.2% in 2003. Reported a decrease of 19% among Alaska high school students reporting having had at least one drink of alcohol in the past 30 days from 47.5% in 1995 to 38.7% in 2003.
- California - Reported a decrease of 71% among 7th graders reporting binge drinking (five or more drinks in a row) in the past 30 days from 10% in the 1997-1998 school year to 2.9% in the 2001-2002 school year. Reports a decrease of 31% among 11th graders reporting having used inhalants in the past 30 days from 5.8% in the 1997-1998 school year to 4.0% in the 2001-2002 school year.
- Delaware - Reported a decrease of 16% among high school students reporting ever having smoked a cigarette from 74% in 1997 to 62% in 2003.
- Florida – Reported a decrease in past 30 day marijuana use among 6th through 12th graders by 11.1% from 14.4% in 2000 to 12.8% in 2003. Similar data obtained from the Monitoring the Future survey from 2003 show that past 30 day marijuana use among 12th graders was 19.9%, which is well above the 12.8% reported by the Florida students.
- Hawaii – Reported that the perception of harm associated with the "occasional use of inhalants" among 12th graders was increased by 58% from 48.5% in 1998 to 76.8% in 2002.
- Idaho – Reported a 22% reduction in lifetime alcohol use among 8th graders from 49.7% in 1996 to 38.7% in 2002. When compared to the 2002 Monitoring the Future results for lifetime alcohol use among 8th graders, which is 47%, this number is particularly impressive.
- Illinois – Reported a decrease of 19.8% among 8th graders reporting past month use of alcohol from 21.2% in 2000 to 17% in 2002, which is below the national average of 19.6% for 8th graders as reported in the 2002 Monitoring the Future survey.
- Indiana – Reported a 15.7% decrease in past 30 day marijuana use among 12th graders, down from 23.5% in 2001 to 19.8% in 2003.
- Iowa – Reported a decrease of four percentage points in current alcohol use from 1999. The largest decrease (5 percentage points) was reported by respondents in the 11th grade (Comparison years 1999 – 2002).

- Kansas – Reported a 54% decrease in past 30 day meth use among 8th graders, down from 2.19% in 1997 to 1% in 2003. These statistics are well below the national average of 1.29%, as reported in the 2003 Monitoring the Future survey.
- Maryland – Reported a 47% decrease in past 30 day meth use among 8th graders, down from 1.9% in 1998 to 1.0% in 2002. Similar data from the 2002 Monitoring the Future survey showed that 1.1% of 8th graders reported past 30 day use of meth.
- Kentucky – Reported an increase of 29.5% among 12th graders reporting no lifetime use of marijuana from 44% in 2000 to 57% in 2003.
- Maine – Reported a decrease of 20% among students in grades 6 – 12 reporting past month alcohol use from 38% in 1995 to 30.3% in 2002.
- Michigan – Reported a 15% decrease among 12th graders reporting past month use of alcohol from 55% in 2001 to 47% in 2002. This is well below the national average for 12th graders of 48.6%, as cited in the 2002 Monitoring the Future survey.
- Minnesota – Reported an increase of 11% among middle school students reporting they never smoked and are committed to not smoking from 50.5% in 2000 to 56% in 2002.
- Nevada – Reported a decrease of 16% among high school students reporting past use of marijuana from 26.6% in 2001 to 22.3% in 2003.
- New Hampshire – Reported a decrease of 10% among high school students reporting past month use of alcohol from 52.5% in 2001 to 47.1% in 2003.
- New York – Reported a 22.4% decrease among students reporting past 30 day use of marijuana from 26.7% in 2001 to 20.7% in 2003.
- Ohio - Reported that the percentage of youth in grades six through eight who reported using illegal drugs at least once during the past year declined by 21%, from 14.9% in 1998-99 school year to 11.7% in 2002. This decline is far better than the declines experienced nationwide in 2002, which was 16%.
- Pennsylvania – Reported a 64% decrease in the number of students violating drug and alcohol school policies from 11% in 1996-1997 to 4% in 2001-2002.
- Utah – Reported that the number of 7th through 12th graders who reported using marijuana in the last 30 days decreased at a rate of 53%, from 11.8% in 1984 to 5.5% in 2003.
- Washington – Reported that 25% fewer students reported past 30 day use of marijuana and 21% fewer students reported binge drinking in the past 30 days after participating in

Washington State's Prevention and Intervention Services Program during the 2003-2004 school year.

- West Virginia -- The West Virginia Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities program contributed to an 18.9% decrease in past thirty day use of marijuana among 9th to 12th graders, down from 28.5% in 1997 to 23.1% in 2003. It also contributed to a 13.8% decrease in past thirty day use of alcohol among 9th to 12th graders, down from 51.5% in 1997 to 44.4% in 2003.
- Wisconsin -- Reported that the number of 12th graders reporting lifetime use of inhalants has decreased at a rate of 28.9%, from 14.5% in 2001 to 10.3% in 2003.

For most children, schools serve as one of the only sources of information about the harms of drug use. The costs associated with drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse add 10 percent—or \$41 billion—to the already strained budgets of schools across the nation and has a devastating impact on the educational performance of students. We ask that funding for the State Grants portion of the SDFSC program be a priority as the appropriations process proceeds.

Thank you for considering our views and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mark Linder

Eleanor H. Norton

Don Yang

Wm Jefferson

Ken Butts

Bert Sykes

Sandra Perry

Pety Ditz

Chad E. Childs

David Price

Tom Davis

Jim Oberster

James Langerwin

Rick Larsen

Mark Foley

Jim Parnest

Ed Case

John T. Tieny

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Major R. Owens

Carolyn B. Mabrey

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Bernie H. Thompson

John Long Jr.
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